

WHAT WAS THE GREATEST BOOK OF 1911?

What was the greatest book of 1911? The Ledger has asked this question of thinking men and women and has received diverse replies.

Here are some of the views expressed, some in interviews, others in letters:

From the Author of "Brain and Personality."

I consider Bergson's "Philosophy" the most important literary contribution of the year 1911. Such a question as to what is, in any field, the greatest book of the year is undoubtedly hard to answer, but, from my own point of view, Bergson's "Philosophy" is the best. It is undoubtedly the finest book on its subject that has appeared in many years. It is a general survey of the philosophical problems of the day, and as such it must exert a great influence on thought. I believe that it will exert the greatest influence of any book of 1911. It is also the best-written book of philosophy that I have seen for a long time. It was first published in French, and has lately been translated into English.

Personally, I don't agree with half that Bergson says. He looks at things from the metaphysical standpoint, and I have no patience with anything metaphysical. But, nevertheless, I believe the book to be the year's greatest literary offering.

DR. WILLIAM HANNA THOMSON.

From the Bishop of the Diocese of New York.

In response to your inquiry, asking me the name of the best book of the year, permit me to say that it is a difficult if not impossible question to answer. There are different departments of literature—philosophy, science, romance, theology, poetry, etc.—and each of these departments has made some notable contributions to the literary output of the year; and yet I am not aware of any one book in any one of them of transcendent or epoch-making value like Darwin's "Descent of Man," some fifty years ago. I can only say that, as far as my observation goes, a good general average has been maintained.

DAVID H. GREER.

From Walter Damrosch.

To me the most interesting book of the year has been Richard Wagner's "Story of My Life." That is a remarkable book. It is a most wonderful study of the evolution of a man from low and sordid beginnings to a higher conception of life. I regard this book more as a literary than a musical document. It is not the life of Wagner, but a supplemental study, a record of actual events as they shaped his life; it is a much more universal thing than if it were the study of Richard Wagner merely, as a musician. The proof of this lies in the book's enormous popularity and its great sales. It has been read by thousands of people outside the small musical circle. It is a book that will live as literature.

The only book comparable to it, in my opinion, is Jean Jacques Rousseau's "Confessions." Wagner's story of his life will live along with Rousseau's confessions and Boswell's "Life of Johnson."

The lesson of Wagner's book should be that no man ought to be judged by the episodes of his career, by this bit of experience, or that isolated. The real analysis must depend upon the net result, and the real judgment must be passed on the net result, taking into consideration the causes that lead up to acts.

While I myself believe that Wagner's autobiography is the greatest book of the year, I realize that there have been many other interesting

volumes published in 1911. Any book of Bernard Shaw's plays is always amusing and interesting. And I think that great interest must be aroused by Chamberlain's "Foundations of the Nineteenth Century." That is a remarkable book, although I think its conclusions are erroneous. I do not, however, think that it will influence the thought of the times, because, while it starts out with a grasp of conditions that seems almost incomprehensible, it does not get anywhere; its conclusions are not conclusive.

I am sorry that the year 1911 has produced no poetry. I sigh for a poet. There have been a few poems written, some charming ones, but nothing really great since Meredith. In fiction, while I am not prepared to say what is the greatest production of the year, I think it is interesting to note the good work done in America by women. Edith Wharton's "Ethel Frome" and Margaret DeLand's "The Iron Woman" stand out. But I regret that we have in America no such group of fearless novelists as has England in Galsworthy, Bennett and Wells.

WALTER DAMROSCH.

From Rabbi Stephen S. Wise.

"Being asked to name 'the book of the year,' I name the book that has made the profoundest impression upon me. The book of the year, from my own viewpoint, is a book which, up to this time, is but little known. The author has not yet come to his own in this country, and I am not certain that, even in his native England, even the discerning quite understand that a new and most significant figure has arisen in the world of English letters.

"William Wilfrid Gibson. It is evident, comes of rarely gifted stock, for his sister, Mrs. Thomas K. Cheyne, wife of Canon Cheyne of Oxford, has for several years been writing poems of a distinctly individual character, many of them brought together in a recently published volume entitled 'The Way of the Lord.'

"The book by W. W. Gibson, which for me has been the book of the year, is 'Daily Bread,' published in the form of three little volumes.

"Daily Bread" is an achievement of most uncommon literary and spiritual value. Mr. Gibson has brought together within the compass of 'Daily Bread' a series of sketches in poetical form of the lives of the men and women workers in England who spend the whole of life in toiling, rather than getting, daily bread. "Simple, sincere, powerful, are the glimpses of the life of unprotesting toil and unrelenting misery. The sketches of Gibson are not a matter of skillful literary analysis, nor of morbid and half-benevolent characterization. They are not bits of history nor attempts at vivisection. They are terribly real and terribly earnest portraits of terribly real lives, with nothing, however, of the sordid elements of realism, but with much of a deeply convincing spiritual insight that gives to these books a rarely arresting quality. He who would run as he reads must not nibble at 'Daily Bread.' But let him who would commune with a seer-poet turn to the 'Daily Bread' which William Wilfrid Gibson offers to the souls of men."

From a Noted Playwright.

To ask a fair-minded man, in this day and generation, in which of the making of books there is no end, to pass judgment upon what he considers the most important of these books is tantamount to putting him to look for a needle in a haystack.

During the year just passed I have

browsed in many books and several of them I have read with more than passing interest. Of these several, one alone stands out in conspicuous relief against all others. As a matter of fact, this book, "The Changing Chinese," by Professor Edward A. Ross, made an impression upon me such as no book has succeeded in making since I was a boy with a dog-eared copy of "Ivanhoe" under my pillow at night.

What the enchanted world of adventure and romance invoked by Scott and the Romanticists was to me in boyhood such a book as Professor Ross's is to me now. Dealing as it does with a race and a civilization about which at the best we can have but a glimmer of understanding, Professor Ross's book partakes of the nature of a most vivid and absorbing romance, and that notwithstanding the fact that in all its three hundred and odd pages there is not a single word of "fine writing," not the slightest intimation of sentiment, per se—nothing, in short, but facts and figures of the most uncompromising nature, with observations not of the dramatist, but the man of science, the historian, and sociologist.

And yet, between the lines, what innumerable dramas, what stupendous poetry, what vistas of mystery and romance! Every page teems with splendid tragedy. In a single paragraph in that portion of the book bearing upon the City of Canton there is enough material to keep a playwright busy all his life.

DAVID BELASCO.

From a Famous Mural Painter.

I have been so busy during the past year that I have been unable to find time for much general reading outside the line of my own particular interests, and therefore I feel that I cannot answer your question in any general way.

Among art books, however, the most interesting and valuable that I have read seems to me to be Kenyon Cox's collection of lectures recently published under the title of "The Classic Point of View." I have found that of immense interest, and, although I am unable to speak as a critic of general literature, I may say that the books I have read that seems to me to be the best in the art line.

EDWIN H. BLASHFIELD.

From the Secretary of Carnegie Foundation.

I think that Wagner's autobiography is the greatest book of the year 1911. I think it is important because

Morning Cable Report

(Continued from Page One.)

LONDON, January 27.—It is reported here that the Japanese minister at Peking has been recalled.

PEKIN, January 27.—The armistice will likely be extended.

PARIS, January 27.—A settlement has been reached between France and Italy over the capture of the French steamers Manouba and Carthage off the African coast. It is rumored that another steamer has been taken.

WASHINGTON, January 27.—President Taft has left this city to confer with political leaders in New York and Ohio. He will be absent five days.

NEW YORK, January 27.—The Connaught party has returned to Ottawa.

WALLA WALLA, January 27.—This city had a \$200,000 fire last night in the business section. One fireman was killed.

SAN FRANCISCO, January 27.—Eugene Schmitz, who is on trial has applied to the appellate court for a writ of prohibition.

BOY SCOUTS

(Continued From Page Nine)

Judd used to say, "Settle into it first, then away you go."

The boy follows the flag that marks more fun than usual. Therefore along

with the handy jobs of bringing the apparently drowned back to life; tying splints on a dog's broken leg; putting out a fire; quelling a panic or helping a cripple across the street, the scoutmaster learns, teaches and engages in now-fangled kinds of games called "scouting." Observation parties are pitted against other observation parties, under a system of marks whereby the keen-eyed, keen-nosed (no smoking) and keen-eared patrol carries off the bun. By night or by day this—(mollycoddles stay home), and the umpire's word is never questioned. He works for love and what he says goes.

Here are some of the titles of games, a hundred or more being in print; others "indigenous to Hawaiian soil" are in preparation. Scouts to the Rescue; Kamehameha's treasure; Smugglers at Diamond Head; Moanahua flag raid; the Diamond Thief (Mr. Lua and Duck Soon are in this), and games which employ signaling, fire signals at night, smoke by day—and so on.

We never "tout" for scouts. Scouts tout for us. There is no "Please come in;" it is rather, "Oh, sir, may I stay in?"

No big scout game has ever been pulled off in our area. The first is set for February 11 and is primarily for our eighteen scoutmasters. It will be played at Moanahua, probably, perhaps the Country Club. Each scoutmaster will bring the leader and the second leader of his embryo patrol. We expect fifty men and boys. Under the direction of Captain W. H. Johnson, Twenty-fourth Infantry, this game will be played. Objects in view (each game has an object which must be explained to every scout playing); how to observe a place and the people of it without being seen yourself, also how

to obey orders, thus learning how to give orders.

As will be seen, these eighteen scoutmasters, when by hard work they have trained up a full troop of twenty-four boys each, will be an outfit 480 strong. As there are 3000 boys of scout age (12 to 18) on Oahu, you can see how obedient, how loyal, how all around decent, helpful and handy a boy must be to stay in!

Every dollar spent by a scout for uniform or equipment must be earned or won by himself or his team. It may be years before we are uniformed, but scouting takes no heed of that. No prizes for mere dress. We earn money by giving displays, doing real work or getting men and women to join the organization as non-voting members of the Council.

Four sorts of membership exist—\$1, \$5, \$10, \$25 and \$100—you have a voice in the meetings twice a year, but no vote. We will require \$1000 a year for club-room rents, transportation and prizes. Perhaps more.

The Council is as follows: President, George R. Carter. Vice president, H. M. von Holt. Treasurer, A. F. Judd. Secretary, George C. Potter.

Members: Admiral Cowles, S. B. Dole, Emil A. Berndt, B. von Damm, General Macomb, Robert Anderson, W. F. Dillingham Alexander Lindsay, Jr., Dr. Hobdy, John P. Erdman, Brother Henry, Kamalopoli, Paul Super, D. H. Hitchcock, C. R. Hemenway, W. L. Whitney, George H. Angus, C. Al, S. J. Castro, Marcellino, J. A. Wilder.

The executive committee: H. von Holt, G. R. Carter, A. F. Judd, George C. Potter, W. L. Whitney, George H. Angus and James A. Wilder (scout commissioner).

Finance: George Angus, B. von Damm, A. F. Judd.

Honors: J. A. Wilder (chairman), D. H. Hitchcock, Judge Whitney, Dr. Hobdy, Paul Super and Brother Henry.

Here are the intending scoutmasters: H. M. von Holt, D. H. Hitchcock, George H. Angus, H. Dillingham, E. A. Berndt, B. von Damm, Blake, Todd, Young Carruthers, L. I. Blackman, Percy Deverill, Jas. Barnes, G. Birk-

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man, McGuire, K. Brown, R. A. Cooke, open order drill, under Captain W. F. A. L. Castle, S. J. Castro, C. Loomis, Johnson; first aid (elementary), under S. Bowen. If the Council finds these men fit after three months' scouting they will be given warrants. Meanwhile they will be teaching, each of them two boys, to be leader and second in new troops. On Tuesdays from 5 to 7 various evolutions are gone through. (See E. O. Hall's bulletin board Mondays and the press.) We have tackled scout drill with staves, under Wilder;

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